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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **FORMER BANK EMPLOYEE RECEIVES 40 MONTH PRISON SENTENCE FOR IDENTITY FRAUD**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on May 19, 2003, BONNIE RAE RODRIQUEZ, D.O.B.2/23/67, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced to 40 months imprisonment following an upward departure at sentencing by United States District Judge Earl H. Carroll, in Phoenix, Arizona.

In deciding to depart upward from the Guidelines, Judge Carroll cited several factors. He noted that this case involved the theft of the identities of a number of innocent people who suffered severe damage to their reputation, credit history and emotional stress in attempting to restore their credit histories. The actual monetary loss of more than \$100,000 underscored the seriousness of the offense.

The court also noted that the defendant had a history of working for financial sector companies, such as banks or collection agencies, and had used the personal identifying information she obtained at work to commit new frauds using new identities. Rodriguez also had a lengthy criminal record dating back to 1989

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for fraudulent schemes, theft, issuing bad checks, and forgery. She was recently sentenced on two separate convictions in Maricopa County Superior Court.

As part of the sentence, the court barred the defendant from working for collection agencies or banks for three years following her release from federal custody. The court also required her to disclose her financial records to the court officials, and to refrain from entering new credit relationships without the approval of court officials.

Rodriguez had entered a plea of guilty on November 5, 2002, to Misuse of a Social Security Number, a violation of Title 42, United States Code, Section 408(a)(7)(B), which carried a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

According to court records, RODRIQUEZ was working at Bank of America when she was suspected of improperly accessing customer account information. She was fired from Bank of America. After her firing, documents were found which indicated she was using the identities of others to make purchases of furniture, automobiles, and other merchandise and shared these records with others.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, and the Social Security Administration-Office of the Inspector General.

The prosecution was handled by Daniel R. Drake, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-02-626-PHX-EHC and 02-6088M  
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